

Message Text

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SUBJECT: NIGERIA AND EQUATORIAL GUINEA

REF: LAGOS 494, YAOUNDE 127

1. SENTIMENT HERE CONTINUES TO RUN HIGH OVER MISTREATMENT NIGERIAN LABORERS IN EQUATORIAL GUINEA (EG) AS LARGE NUMBERS THOSE WORKERS HITTING HOME SOIL AND TELLING HORROR STORIES TO PUBLIC. MEDIA FOR PAST WEEK HAS BEEN FULL OF SUCH TALES; NUMEROUS PRESS COMMENTARIES, PUBLISHED LETTERS AND TELEGRAMS TO FMG HAVE URGED VARYING

KINDS OF GOVERNMENT RETALIATORY ACTION. SANCTIONS DEMANDED INCLUDE: TAKING MATTER TO OAU; BREAKING DIPLOMATIC, TRADE AND ALL OTHER SOCIAL TIES; EXACTING REPARATIONS FOR ALL "MURDERED" NIGERIANS; EXPELLING OR JAILING ALL EG NATIONALS HERE; AND COMPELLING REPAYMENT OF ALL AID NIGERIA HAS EXTENDED TO EG SINCE (AND EVEN BEFORE) INDEPENDENCE.

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2. FMG ADDRESSED ITSELF TO MATTER FOR SECOND TIME IN TWO WEEKS

PERIOD DURING MEA COMMISSIONER GARBA'S SPEECH TO DIPLOMATIC CORPS JANUARY 21 (SEE LAGOS A-10 FOR OTHER TOPICS GARBA'S REMARKS). REFERRING TO THE QTE PAIN AND ANGER UNQTE GOVERNMENT FEELS, GARBA SAID THAT QTE THE FEDERAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE EVERY MEASURE IT DEEMS APPROPRIATE TO EXACT RESTITUTION ON BEHALF OF ITS NATIONALS WHO HAVE SUFFERED GRIEVOUS LOSS IN THE LATEST INCIDENTS AND ON BEHALF OF THE SURVIVORS OF THOSE KILLED. UNQTE.

3. GOVERNMENT ALSO NOW GEARING UP FOR RESETTLEMENT AND REHABILITATION OF REPATRIATES. TERMING RETURNEES PLIGHT A QTE NATIONAL DISASTER UNQTE, THE EAST CENTRAL STATE GOVERNMENT REPORTEDLY HAS ESTABLISHED TRANSIT CAMPS IN EACH ITS THIRTY-NINE ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS AND HAS ASKED FEDERAL AUTHORITIES TO PROVIDE NAIRA FIFTY MILLION TO SET UP FARM SETTLEMENTS TO ABSORB RETURNEES. FMG AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER MAFENI, WHO PRESENTLY ON TOUR RETURNEE CAMPS PORT HARCOURT, CALABAR AND ENGUGU AREAS, HASANNAOUNCED THAT THE MORE THAN FORTY-FIVE THOUSAND NIGERIANS EXPECTED TO COME BACK FROM EG WOULD BE PROVIDED EMPLOYMENT, MANY BEING DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT THE FEDERATION TO WORK ON STATE FARMS. EACH STATE WOULD BE EXPECTED PROVIDE TWO THOUSAND HECTARES LAND FOR PLANTATIONS ON WHICH RETURNEES WOULD GROW FOOD FOR THEMSELVES AND SURROUNDING POPULACE. ACCORDING TO AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER, RIVERS STATE ALREADY PREPARING OFFER SUCH ACREAGE. MAFENI HAS ALSO INDICATED THAT HE WILL MEET WITH TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONERS IN LAGOS SOON TO DECIDE HOW BEST TO IMPLEMENT PLAN TO SPEND NAIRA THREE HUNDRED MILLION ON OVERALL RETURNEE REHABILITATION SCHEME OVER NEXT TWO YEARS.

4. COMMENT: DESPITE PUBLIC OUTCRY FOR STERNER ACTION AGAINST EG, FMG (PRESUMING GARBA'S REMARKS A GOOD INDICATOR) APPEARS AT THIS POINT TO BE READY TO SETTLE FOR SOME FORM OF COMPENSATION FOR THOSE NIGERIANS KILLED IN RECENT MALABO INCIDENTS. IF INDUCING GOEG TO ACTUALLY PAY SUCH COMPENSATION SHOULD PROVE DIFFICULT, HOWEVER; FMG COULD BE DRIVEN TO EFFECT TOUGHER MEASURES.

5. FMG ALSO SEEMS TO BE MAKING SERIOUS ATTEMPT TO OVERCOME POSSIBLY THORNY PROBLEM OF REHABILITATING RETURNEES. BY SPREADING RETURNING WORKERS OVER ENTIRE COUNTRY, GOVERNMENT OBVIOUSLY ATTEMPTING LIGHTEN IMPACT ON ALREADY STRAINED ECONOMIC LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONDITIONS IN SOUTHEASTERN STATES-- FROM WHICH AREA ALMOST ALL REFUGEES ORIGINATED. REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER POPULACE OF NORTHERN AND WESTERN STATES WILL BE PLEASED TO HELP OUT IN FMG-ENVISAGED RESETTLEMENT AND, IN EFFECT, FORCED INTEGRATION PLAN. HOWEVER, NUMBERS IN EACH STATE WOULD BE RELATIVELY SMALL AND THEREFORE PERHAPS ACCEPTABLE TO LOCALS. RETURNEES THEMSELVES WOULD NOT BE HAPPY BEING DEPOSITED IN ALIEN AREAS BUT SITUATION MIGHT BE SEEN AS MORE DESIRABLE THAT BEING LANDLESS AND JOBLESS

IN "HOME" TERRITORY.

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